

Layered Images Layered

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I have been working with a textile technique called Ikat (Kasuri in Japanese) in my wall pieces. It is a time-consuming process of ancient tradition, which is thought to have been discovered and developed in the area of India/ Indonesia and spread to other parts of the world. Japan is one of the places where we can still observe Ikat textiles as a living tradition and some Japanese think Ikat is unique to Japan, along with Indigo. Yet Ikat is universal---without apparent boundaries in time or place. There are many Ikat textiles being produced all over the world. India, Indonesia, and Guatemala, and Japan are famous for their fine production of Ikat. Traditional Ikat textiles are beautiful. When they were first woven, they clearly mirrored the aesthetics of the weaver, perspective of the market and the society of the time. Time has changed as well as our living environment and life-style. I believe it is significant to weave Ikat to preserve the time-honored motifs, patterns and techniques; but at the same time, there must be another phase of Ikat textiles to reflect the contemporary world we are now living in, which I see as a part of continuous history. I design my textile work in a traditional context with a contemporary vision.

I use the traditional approach to Ikat, which applies hand-tying the threads as a resist method prior to dyeing in order to produce the patterns before the actual weaving begins. Designing and weaving Ikat have many limitations throughout the process, which are usually considered "limitations" by some as a negative aspect to work with. To me, such limitations offer more freedom to explore and expand the possibilities in my work, and as long as I pay full attention to these limitations, they become my sincere collaborators in achieving what I want.

What I have been working on in recent years is to create the layered images, which have captured my interest for long. In the piece; "silent stones unfolding" (photograph P.12,- warp & weft Ikat), I applied the same theme of the layered images of air, light, water, and foothills with the technique of inlaid threads (in this case, weft-inlay) which I have developed for the effect. Also, during the dye process, I intentionally streak-dyed the weft silk by adding various dye-colors to create the more interesting effects of shimmering colors.

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This effect has been more intentionally employed in the work; "NINE TONE POEM ~ Verse of the Earth, Verse of the Sky, Verse of the Sea" (photograph P.13,-warp & weft Ikat). This piece was designed to be hanged on a eighteen meter (24foot) wide marble wall where people lounge before/ after visiting the archive at Ko-un-kan, of Fukuhara-Gakuen, Kitakyushu-city, Fukuoka, Japan. The number, nine from the name of the city (kitakyu-shu, directly translated is: north- nine-states/ lands) gave me an inspiration to start designing the piece. Nine represents the completion of the universe in many cultures and religions in the world. For instance, Mandalas in Buddhism depict nine stations or paths in the universe. In the realm of ancient Greek mythology, Zeus has nine daughters (Muses) and they are also representative of nine qualities of femininity. Visually, the nine square panels carries a range of shimmering colors and shapes, in which I have this time translated the layered images into the two different elements. The colored blocks project beyond the background with masculine pose, while the floating figures in the panels embrace feminine movements. By layering the two elements, I try not to set them apart one from the other, but rather to bring out the 'wholeness of being' in this piece, as expressed in Nature itself---the Earth, the Sky, and the Sea.

The images in my work are non-objective, and with them, I work to create a personal feeling in the environment where my work is placed and as well as in the hearts of the viewers. To me, textile has power to bring a sense of humane-ness wherever it is presented. Probably it may be from the nature of textiles, being originally developed from organic matter and its deep roots in human history, which gives us this wonderful sense of intimacy. After gaining freedom within "so-called" limitations of the Ikat-techniques, my interest seems to have moved away from contesting the techniques. Gradually I have developed a personal dialogue in collusion with the weaving process itself, and inscribed on the woven surface the layered images of colors and shapes created by the faint balance of warp and weft.